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ABSTRACT

Dr. Maria Montessori's 1913 visit and lecture tour to the United States is described in detail with numerous citations from newspaper coverage of the event. The enthusiastic reception extended to the European physician and educator is reviewed, and her meetings, notably with Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell, President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, Miss Helen Keller, leading educators, and members of Boston society, are described. Varied responses of Americans to basic Montessori ideas and practices are disclosed, and the role of S. S. McClure of "McClure's Magazine" in originating and promoting the lecture tour is revealed. In conclusion, some reasons for the decline of the Montessori movement are suggested. (RH)

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THE AMERICAN ODYSSEY OF MARIA MONTESSORI

by William Kornegay

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As the Hamburg-American steamer Cincinnati sailed into New York harbor on December 3, 1913, Dr. Maria Montessori stood at the rail from the moment the buildings of New York came into sight. Already reporters were swarming up the ladder from the pilot boat in attempts to interview her. "I must," she was heard to remark, "see everything."[1] The ship docked at noon. One reporter noted that such a "large and enthusiastic company" of former students, members of the American Montessori Educational Association, Italo-Americans, and newspapermen greeted her "that the other passengers slipped from the dock unnoticed."[2]

The Timesman subjected her to the first of the many personal descriptions she would receive while in America:

> Mme. Montessori is a woman of attractive personality. She is dark with a clear complexion and bright color. She has wavy dark hair and a pleasing voice. She speaks French besides her native tongue. She is a woman of early middle age, inclined to plumpness, and has a general air of healthfulness and normality.[3]

To her greeters she said in French, "Some day I hope to learn your language, but I am so busy teaching I have no time to study for myself."[4] One man, not of the welcoming group, was overheard to query, "Who is the woman in the fur coat and the black veil? That's the warmest welcome I've ever seen anyone receive."[5]

McClure's Magazine had made Maria Montessori known to Americans. In 1911 an article, "An Educational Wonder-Worker, the Methods of Maria Montessori," appeared. The public response was enormous. Letters poured into McClure's, and in Rome Maria Montessori "found herself engulfed in such a correspondence

as threatened to take all her time."[6] More articles followed in McClure's as well as other U. S. journals.

Montessori, the first female physician in Italy, while working with the poor and mentally retarded small children in Rome, had slowly formulated her Method of "auto-education." It was on display at her Casa dei Bambini. The heart of the Method was in having a child "work" with an assortment of "didactic materials" that had been "scientifically developed to stimulate his senses." The emphasis was on individual, rather than group, activity in what Montessori called a "prepared environment." For example, children learned the shape of letters of the alphabet by running their fingers over letters cut out of sand paper. Muscular coordination came with lacing and buttoning pieces of cloth attached to a frame. Form was taught as the children placed geometric insets into wood cut outs. In addition, other forms of "sense training" were emphasized as the little ones arranged flowers, polished shoes, watered plants, swept floors, dusted furniture, and set tables. "Things are the best teachers" became a basic Montessori dictum.

The flamboyant S. S. McClure enjoyed his last editorial triumph with the Montessori pieces. (Financial troubles were soon to make McClure's his in name only.) He had commissioned the initial article after he had heard of the Method while he was in London in 1910. Although his associates on the magazine had unanimously agreed against running the article, McClure wisely persisted.[7]

The article's success was soon followed by an English translation of Montessori's Pedagogia Scientifica, which came out as The Montessori Method. Followers now had a bible. McClure arranged with Montessori for the manufacture and sale of the didactic materials in America through a company called the House of Childhood. (A set of materials went for fifty dollars.) A Montessori American Committee was formed to help arrange an international training course

in Rome. Seventy Americans attended. In May, 1913, the Montessori Educational Association was incorporated in Washington.[8]

Two key figures sympathetic to the Method in the United States were Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell. The inventor of the telephone had been concerned for years with methods of teaching--particularly of the deaf. He and Mrs. Bell had followed the reports on Montessori carefully. Mr. McClure came to dinner after he had been to Rome to learn of the Method first hand. Bell told him he considered the Montessori articles as the most important work that McClure's had ever done.[9]

Mrs. Bell, unsympathetic to prevailing kindergarten methods, wanted to see a Montessori class in action. This meant going to Miss Anne E. George. Miss George had resigned her position as a Chicago teacher in 1910 and had gone to Rome to enroll in a Montessori class. On her return she became America's first Montessori teacher. At the time of Mrs. Bell's initial interest, in 1912, Miss George was holding classes on the estate of Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip in Tarrytown on the Hudson. Mrs. Bell saw her there and was delighted by the "initiative and interest shown by the children, their concentration, orderliness, and helpfulness." Her grandchildren must have a Montessori education![10]

Miss George and a friend, Miss Roberta Fletcher, were soon persuaded to come to Washington and establish a Montessori school in the Bell household. Among the students were the children of the Bell daughters, Mrs. David Fairchild and Mrs. Gilbert Grosvenor. As this school soon outgrew its quarters, Mrs. Bell bought a house on Kalorama Road, which she gave to a Board of Trustees made up of interested parents. Her son-in-law, David Fairchild, remembered: "This school played an important part in introducing Doctor Montessori's ideas into America. Mrs. Bell remained the godmother of the school as long as she lived, and followed the careers of all the little 'Montessaurs' as we used to call them,

with the greatest interest."[11] Another Montessori school was organized at the Bells' summer home at Baddeck, Nova Scotia.[12]

With the growing interest in Montessori, and the success of this school in Washington, Mrs. Bell and other parents wished to "extend the same benefit to all children." To this end the Montessori Educational Association was incorporated. Mrs. Bell was a natural for the presidency, and her son-in-law, Gilbert A. Grosvenor, editor of the National Geographic Magazine, became treasurer. McClure was one of the Vice Presidents, as was P.P. Claxton, the U. S. Commissioner of Education. President Wilson's daughter, Margaret Woodrow, Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, author of The Montessori Mother, and Supt. William M. Davidson of the Washington Public Schools served on the Board of Trustees. Miss George was appointed "Director of Montessori Work."[13]

A fond desire of the Association as well as of the American ladies who had studied under Montessori in Rome was for the Italian to further her work by coming to America for a lecture tour. This desire was heartily seconded by McClure. He had lost control of his magazine and now was trying to recoup his finances by appearing on the lecture platform. He found no pleasure there, but he did find success. His entrepreneurial mind quickly saw what a spectacular lecture attraction Montessori would be. If only he could get motion picture rights of her working with her pupils, the triumph would be assured.[14]

In the fall of 1913 McClure was off to Rome. Montessori was most grateful for all the American attention she had been receiving and particularly for that in McClure's and from McClure. Peter Lyon, McClure's grandson and biographer, reports that she told the editor that she thought

he was strong and that he was chivalrous, "comme la personne sans tâche et sans peur." McClure wasted little time laying before her his grand scheme. They would go on a joint lecture tour of the biggest American cities, leaving Houses of Childhood and training schools for teachers of the Method in their wake. They would revolutionize primary education in the New World. Little further persuasion was needed. Montessori would come.[15]

McClure hastened to send the good news to Mrs. Bell. "This plan was decided so late," he noted, "that I was unable to get from you an official invitation from the American Montessori committee. But I know you will pardon me," he added, "for letting it be known that she comes at the invitation of the committee."

He then sketched out parts of the tour:

> The plan is to have her come immediately to Washington, to be received by the committee. It would be a great thing if some members of the committee could meet her at the steamer. I have promised to devote all my time to her while she is in America. I come by the same ship. It was also her expectation to be received by the President, and I presume the Italian ambassador will wish to receive her.
>
> . . . .
>
> I have guaranteed her $600.00 and she is to receive as much more as 60% of the net profits of her lectures amount to.
>
> I regard her coming as a most important and beneficient event.
>
> She is easily fatigued, and she must have two or three days a week absolutely free to herself.
>
> I know I am assuming an extraordinary responsibility but I am sure of the sympathetic and comprehending approval and cooperation of you and Mr. Bell.
>
> . . . .

> There are those here who advise her against coming lest it may injure her dignity! I am sure that we will prove how wrong they are. She is coming putting her faith blindly in my judgment.[16]

This letter was written on November 13 and seven days later, with the blessings of Queen Margherita (a strong Montessori supporter) Montessori and McClure set sail for America.[17]

From the New York pier, Montessori moved to the Holland House to meet reporters and photographers. The crush of the crowd in the lobby was so great that the management had to turn some away by force. With Miss George interpreting, Montessori told of her purpose in coming to America. It was three-fold. She hoped to study the American system of education; she wanted to see the work being done by her American students in the some seventy Montessori classes in the country; and she wished to give a broader view of her work to those who had expressed an interest.

"I have been in receipt of thousands of letters from American men and women during the past year," she noted. Any money she might make from the tour would be applied toward establishing a laboratory school --" a model school for every branch of psychological research in child development. "I hope through such a laboratory," she explained, "to establish an experimental science in pedagogy, a science at which I have made but a mere beginning. I hope to bring out more clearly," she added, "the close relation between physiological and mental growth. That is what my method has tried to do--to develop not only psychic personality but physiological personality, pace by pace with each other."[18]

Her method was, in short, "to give a gradual series of psychic stimuli perfectly adapted to the needs of the child. The environment stimulated

each pupil to his natural development." In such a calm, cordial atmosphere the child had the "freedom of opportunity for a spontaneous expansion of personality."[19]

At the Casa dei Bambini the results, she said, had been "breathtaking."

> The intellectual activity of these little children was like a spring of water gushing out after a pile of rocks had been removed. We did not train nor teach, we merely allowed the child to discover itself. We saw them despising playthings which gave them no chance to exercise their powers of reason. That is why children break their toys, because they are moved by an intellectual curiosity to know what is inside them.

For a healthy child, she said, intellectual exercise is the most pleasant thing he knows. The Casa children saved little objects they had acquired by themselves. "They would preserve unharmed even the most trivial scrap of paper, although free to tear it up, so long as that scrap of paper helped them to exercise their thoughts."[20]

Her most interesting discovery at the Casa, however, was the connection between intellectual activity and the physical health of the children, Even though no food or medicine was given at the school and these children went home for lunch, "in almost every case a new vigor and health was shown by blood supply, weight and stature." Why her students, she said, looked as if they were "the children of wealthy parents living in the country and presented a strong contrast to their brothers and sisters at home." Montessori attributed this to a "complete satisfaction of psychic life" in the nine-to-five, eleven-month school year they were following. After all, she added, "this amazing discovery might have been foreseen had we stopped to think how our own physical health depends far more on happiness and a peaceful conscience than upon anything material as bread."[21]

When asked, "Why are children bad?" she delivered an opinion which would prove not to be popular with many American editorialists. Children are bad, she said, when they are not brought up properly. "We believe in taking the baby away from his or her mother just as soon as the child is born. That is because the mother does not know how to care for her offspring. Parents require much training before they are to be trusted with their infant offspring."[22] A crying child is a suffering child, she observed. "Modern science has been able to interpret the needs of babies so that they will not suffer, and therefore they do not cry." Babies do not cry when they are rationally fed.[23]

With her first American press conference behind her, Montessori took a train for Washington.

Her American arrival received wide attention and mixed reviews in the papers. The Tribune hailed her as the most interesting woman in Europe and noted that her "theories of individuality of permitting each child to develop freely and without restraint, have an especial appeal in this free-for-all-country." After all, they concluded, "America is a Montessori nation to start with."[24]

Her view on "crying babies" was not so popular. The Sun wondered what became of the "antiquated notion that crying is [the baby's] sole form of exercise and nature's method of enlarging the lung capacity? How is it that lambs bleat and little chickens peep when neither are 'uncomfortable'...?"[25]

It was obvious to the Philadelphia Public Ledger that this Italian didn't understand American "ideals and practice." Her point of view, they chauvinistically noted, was of one "accustomed to life in crowded European cities, where apartments of from two to five rooms make up the home, and a narrow range of living makes ordinary family life very difficult." But the Ledger generously conceded the following day that even though some of Madame Montessori's theories seemed "serious

and even grotesque," she would doubtless have "some reasonable explanation even for some of her extreme ideas." After all, they concluded, "Italian babies, even if born in a tenement near the Pantheon, cannot differ very much from other infants the world over."[26]

The Times judiciously thought Montessori's arrival gave occasion for inquiry into whether the Method was adaptable to prevailing systems. While it seemed "revolutionary enough," there was "nothing new in this. Dr. Montessori's chief claim to distinction, in fact, is that she has rediscovered the master principle embodied in the kindergarten of the German Froebel." They saw obstacles in the lack of able directors, the extra space needed in a Montessori classroom, and the smaller number of pupils in such a class. "Despite these obstacles," they generously noted, "the 'new' method is showing a vitality that proclaims it to be something better than an educational fad."[27]

Maria Montessori arrived in Washington in the early morning hours of December 4th. For the next three days the Bell residence was the "Mecca for educational enthusiasts." One of the first to call on her was Commissioner Claxton. He was shortly followed by Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson, who had canceled engagements in New York to spend the three days with the Italian visitor. In a White House automobile the President's daughter showed the Dottoressa the sights of Washington. A short audience with the President was arranged "despite the fact that President Wilson had canceled all other engagements on account of his cold."[28]

Montessori again met the press and the Herald gave her its page one lead headline: "NEW RACE WILL ENSUE FROM THIS TEACHING PLAN." The Post quoted her as saying, "Let the schools take the place of the hospitals and penitentiaries." Her meaning, they added was that "While disease and crime may not be entirely eradicated, Dr. Montessori...is convinced that both may be minimized to a point of practical elimination if the proper attention is given children in their early school years."[29]

Children, Montessori said, should not be met with "artificial interference in the schoolroom" but should be "disciplined by the work they do." Desks and seats used in the average public school, she told the reporters, are "barbarous affairs. Future generations," she foresaw, "will place them in museums as examples of torturing instrumentalities used in this enlightened age."[30]

On its editorial page, the Herald had mixed feelings. In the Method they saw "little more than a protest against the rigid machine-like system under which American children are reared," which "perhaps points a way for future progress." "Dr. Maria Montessori," they also added, "claims to have taught idiots to write. What we chiefly desire is some one to teach them not to write."[31]

On her second day in the capital Montessori visited the school on Kalorama Road. This, reputedly, was the first time she had seen her methods used in a foreign country. "I never dreamed that a school so characteristic of my teaching existed in this country," she said. While the children "seemed to recognize her as their friend on first sight," they were "not a little distressed," said one reporter, when they learned she could not speak English and answer their many questions. But she did stay to visit all their classes and lunched with them.[32]

After a visit to the Italian Embassy, she returned to the Bells to deal with her many callers as well as the telegrams which were coming in from all over the country requesting lectures. Things were going well on this first stop of the tour, and she was pleased with the capital. "Washington," she observed, is "a wonderful combination of greatness

and peace."[33]

Saturday, December 6th, was Montessori's big day in the city. For her lecture at the New Masonic Temple "a number of noted pedagogues . . . arrived in the city to supplement the Washington colony." Her audience included "about 1,000 distinguished Washingtonians and diplomats," including Miss Wilson. From the stage Alexander Graham Bell introduced her, and she was "cheered heartily by the audience, which stood in her honor."[34]

The general format for her American lectures called for her to speak of her method, stopping at brief intervals for Miss George to translate. At the conclusion of her remarks, the films were shown with comments made on them. This she did in Washington. The Herald noted that she deplored the fact that science had "confined itself to the study of abnormal children to the neglect of ordinary 'kids'." They also noted that she thought the object of teaching was "to set children free and develop activity -- not to teach anything directly."[35]

Although the lecture was well-attended, it was the reception at the Bell home that got the attention. The papers outdid themselves. The Herald hailed it as "one of the most brilliant. . . ever given in Washington." The Post said this event for "one of the most noted European women of the day . . . brought together a brilliant and distinguished gathering, worthy of the social center of the country which Washington has become."[36] The Providence Sunday Journal's correspondent was not to be outdone:

> The most important people of the social and official world of Washington were present, and to those of them who are familiar with the French or Italian language Dr. Montessori conversed with them in those tongues, but with others she talked through an interpreter, and all were impressed by her charm of manner and also by the attractiveness of the theme of social and educational reform which she is here to expound. Miss Margaret Wilson, who has long been interested in educational subjects, assisted in receiving the guests.[37]

These four hundred guests, the New York Times soberly recounted, included Mr. McClure, Dr. Claxton, the French Ambassador and Mrs. Jusserand, members of the Italian and Spanish Embassies, the German Ambassador and Countess von Bernstorff, the ministers of Norway and Uruguay, Secretary of the Navy and Mrs. Daniels, Secretary of Agriculture and Mrs. Houston, and Mrs. Franklin Lane, wife of the Secretary of the Interior.[38]

Some months after Montessori s departure, Mrs. Bell recalled how "homesick" her guest had been during the visit and how she

> . . . was continuously in a terribly nervous condition because her home letters did not come regularly and because everything was so strange so different from all that she was accustomed to that she did not know how to accommodate herself to her surroundings.
>
> She has wonderful personal magnetism. We were all her most devoted servants while she lived with us. I never saw anything like the way my servants waited on her running upstairs and downstairs -- ready & glad to do things for her I never dreamt of asking for myself.[39]

The next evening in New York, not a seat was empty in Carnegie Hall. People stood four and five deep in the galleries. Over a thousand were turned away at the box office. A second lecture for the following week was hurriedly announced.[40] By any standards it was a remarkable response to a lecture on education.

The stage was bedecked with Italian and American flags, and over it

hung a huge banner proclaiming that "America Welcomes Dottoressa Montessori." Representatives of the educational and cultural "establishment" of New York were on the stage with Montessori, McClure and Miss George. Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History; Montessori's American publisher, Frederick A. Stokes; James G. Cromwell, the principal of Brearley School; James H. Balliett, dean of the School of Pedagogy at N.Y.U. were there, and John Dewey presided.

She must have pleased "progressive" New York pedagogical circles when she said her interest was in the development of the "whole child" in "bodily strength, knowledge and practical necessities of life, keenness of all senses, and accurate muscular control." "My larger aim," she grandly added, "is the eventual perfection of the human race."[41]

An informal public reception on the stage after the lecture had to be held because the Italian "could not attend all the receptions to which she had been asked." The tremendous success of her New York appearance augured well for the remainder of the tour.

The following morning afforded Montessori a personal pleasure she had much anticipated. The American she probably wanted most to meet was Helen Keller. Shortly before leaving Italy she had written her dedication to her second English work, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, to the blind woman. Helen Keller, she wrote, is "a marvelous example of the phenomenon common to all human beings: the possibility of the liberation of the imprisoned spirit of man by the education of the senses.... If one only of the senses" made Helen Keller "a woman of exceptional culture and a writer," she asked, "who better . . .proves the potency of that method of education which builds on [all] the senses?"[42]

Miss Montessori and Miss Keller also had in common the friendship of Alexander Graham Bell. It was to Bell the Kellers had appealed when Helen was six, and it was Bell who had introduced Anne Sullivan to them. Miss Keller was by now an old hand herself on the lecture circuit and had just completed a successful tour. In her Washington appearance, Dr. Bell had introduced her, too.[43]

When Miss Keller arrived at the Holland House, Dr. Montessori embraced her with "a motherly hug." After a confused greeting in Italian and English, she led her to a seat beside her. The communication was circuitous. Montessori conversed by speaking to Miss George in Italian, who translated and spoke to Anne Sullivan Macy in English, who in turn spelled the words in the manual alphabet in Miss Keller's hand.[44]

"Say to her," said Montessori, "that I am too much moved to express what I feel."

"Blessed are the feet of her who comes across the sea with a message of liberty to the children of America," replied Miss Keller.

"How clearly she speaks, and her face is lighted with her soul," was the doctor's reply.

"I am glad that your lecture last night was so successful; they say the hall was crowded."

"Not all the thousands mean one-tenth as much to me as this meeting," came the reply.

"I myself am a product of the Montessori method," said Miss Keller. Mrs. Macy smiled and nodded emphatically.

"Does she know that I have written a dedication to her for my new book?"

Mrs. Macy replied affirmatively, and they spoke of this for sometime. At Miss George's prompting Montessori spoke of the children in the Casa dei Bambini: "Tell her this, that my children understand her; they know the triumph of the soul over difficulties. But the children of the future, the men of the future, will understand her even better than men do now, for they will be liberated and will know the spirit can prevail over the senses."

"You are fighting for the freedom of children," replied Miss Keller and added (as a good socialist), "we are fighting for the industrial revolution."

"But it is all one," said Montessori. "The complete revolution is external and internal, too."

"How wide and far-reaching and many-sided is the Montessori system!" came the reply.

"I began as a sympathizer with political revolutionists of all kinds," asserted the Italian. "Then I came to feel that it is the liberation of this, what we have in our hearts, that is the beginning and end of revolution."

"But, surely," rejoined the American, "we never can have the Montessori system or any other good system of education so long as the conditions of the home, of the parents, of the workers, are so intolerable."

The dottoressa, not the political radical her visitor was, agreed but thought children must be educated so they will "know how to free themselves and others from bondage." The important thing was to bring children to good teachers (such as Mrs. Macy).

But, Miss Keller answered, "When you think of the appalling conditions under which people live, it sometimes seems a miracle that the children grow up at all to intelligence and decency."

An observer present noted that at this point there was a "moment's pause, during which everyone seemed to be thinking of the enormous mountains to be moved."

Montessori attempted to change the conversation. "The Queen Margherita," she said, "is much interested in you."

"I have heard that she is a sweet and noble woman," answered Miss Keller.

"Indeed she is."

"And they tell me the King, too, is a good man. All the same we must get rid of all kings."

Our reporter tells us at this point Mrs. Macy felt called upon to "laughingly" explain that Helen Keller was an "uncompromising revolutionist and naturally opposed to having such officials as kings."

The conversation continued with more compliments between the two principals. Similarities between Mrs. Macy's methods with Helen and the Montessori methods were pointed out.

"Did it ever occur to you, Dr. Montessori," asked Mrs. Macy, "that the same ideas spring up in many parts of the world at about the same time. I did not know of your work nor you of mine. What is it? Is it the spirit of the age manifest here and there in one and another individual?"

"It is all in what we want," interjected Miss Keller. "We ought to want more, for what we want we get, if we want it hard enough. For example, women want the vote, men want better conditions of labor, and

children want more freedom. And remember, what we really want we get."

At the end of the meeting, Montessori invited them to visit her in Rome and apologized that "you had to come to this hotel to see me. When I first came to America I felt I must rush to you and render homage."

Twenty years later Helen Keller could still recall their meeting. In her Journal she recalls that

> [Montessori's] personality, blending intense earnestness and charming vivacity, thrilled me. She expressed much interest when she heard that Teacher and she had independently discovered that the child should not be taught things but rather encouraged to find them out for himself. I remembered how bitterly she commented on the fettering attitude of the Church in Italy towards intellectual freedom and the way in which childhood is marred by poverty.[45]

Philadelphians had been prepared for Montessori's lecture. The Public Ledger had followed her movements and remarks as carefully as any paper in the country. They did not always like what they heard. As previously noted, they had been bothered by Montessori's "famous dictum" that there need be "no crying babies" and had said so in two editorials.[46]

Not content with editorializing, the Ledger even turned to poetry from an anonymous pen:

WHEN BABIES CRY

When babies cry they need a drink
Of water, or some milk, I think;
They're tired and, likewise, hungry too;
Their clothes are tight or loose; tis true
They only ought to laugh and blink.

There's something wrong, I give the wink.
Their makeup? Well, it's far from pink,
And yet there's far too much ado
When babies cry.

Just try my system, spread in ink,
With nurses, wards, the latest kink;
Suppress the mothers, they won't do,
They never know the proper brew
Of theoretics; never think
When babies cry![47]

The Ledger, however, was anything but unfair, and on the day of Montessori's lecture it carried in its columns a lengthy article on the Method by Dr. Lightner Witmer, director of the psychological laboratory and clinic at the University of Pennsylvania. Witmer, an important American convert who had studied the system first hand in Rome, answered criticisms that had been made against the Method. A recurring one, particularly from American Froebelians, was that there was nothing new in it. This was true to some extent, Witmer allowed, since no one can invent or discover a new educational method of entirely original elements. Montessori's combination of elements, however, was new. Furthermore, she is, he said the "first TO DO -- and with striking success -- what others have only talked about." In Rome he had seen self-motivated children "independently and resolutely setting about and executing fairly difficult tasks." What a contrast this was to what went on in many American kindergartens, where many "'dear little children' still sit on 'nice little stools' waiting for 'devoted teachers' to tell them what to do." The Montessori teacher, he said is told to "repress herself," but the kindergarten teacher is "too often the conspicuous center of the performance," and the children "like marionettes, respond to hidden strings which are being pulled at the dictates of a symbolic philosophy, honeyed over with the affectation of an exaggerated mother love." The Montessori Method, he concluded, is "in accord with the educational genius of the American people."[48]

Witmer was soon rewarded for these words. On arrival in Philadelphia, Montessori went immediately to visit one of his classes in experimental psychology at the University and inspected the school's

psychological laboratories.

He was with her on the stage at the Academy of Music in the evening for her lecture to a "large audience." The modesty of her opening sentence, "I wish to honor my collaborators, the little children who have done so much to develop what is now known as the Montessori Method," brought immediate applause. One member of the audience was impressed when she told of how students at three and four years had "sprung into writing," and being so unconscious that they had been taught to write, they cried, "I write! I write!"[49]

Back in New York, the stream of visitors (including Nicholas Murray Butler) and reporters flowed on. At her Brooklyn lecture the following evening her "triumph" continued. The Academy of Music was filled. Notables from the Brooklyn Training School and the Brooklyn Heights Seminary, as well as Frederic B. Pratt of the Institute, shared the stage with her. She heard herself hailed as the greatest woman in the world and an equal to Marconi. One listener was even pleased with the slow pace of the lecture. The time it took to translate allowed the "succession of points to sink into the minds of the hearer."[50]

On Friday, December 12th the Montessori entourage moved north for Boston with a brief pause in Providence. Only a couple of hours could be spent in the Rhode Island capital, but it was a "must" stop, for only here in America was the Method "official." The previous year, at state expense, Miss Clara Craig, head of the Rhode Island State Normal School, had been sent to Rome to study it. On her return she recommended successfully to the State Board of Education that it be adopted by the state and the system be taught at the Normal School.[51]

It was to this school Montessori was taken, given tea, and brought before a group of about one hundred prominent Rhode Islanders, including Governor Pothier. Speaking in French, he said Rhode Island was "deeply interested" in Montessori's method and had been so impressed by Miss Craig's report that "Rhode Island is glad to open its schools to its use."

Montessori, in response, spoke of her pleasure at being welcomed by a governor. "When such a State as Rhode Island approves my work," she said, "I can say, with all sincerity, that it is one of the greatest joys I have ever had, and the memory of it will be one of the profoundest treasures of my life."

After a tribute to her disciple, Montessori was spirited back to the station to continue on to Boston. The Providence Journal said that efforts were being made for another visit in the summer with the hope that Montessori would teach a training course at the Normal school. Those attempts were not successful.[52]

Boston was one of the big stops of the tour with two public lectures. In this American mecca of education it was particularly important to gain acceptance of her ideas, and Montessori was making headway. Classes had been established here by her students, and she had followers in the Harvard Education department. Professor Henry W. Holmes of that institution had written the introduction to The Montessori Method.[53]

Her arrival received wide attention. The mayor extended the freedom of the city, there was the steady stream of visitors to her room at the Touraine, and the reporters in their interviews insured provocative headlines. The Globe headlined its story, "NO 'NAUGHTY' CHILDREN." There is no such thing, they quoted Montessori as saying, "as 'naughtiness' among

children in the commonly accepted sense of the word." Rather, there was "the natural seeking on the part of the child for a means of outlet for his surplus energies." The Method, they reported, was an attempt to provide a "proper and adequate way of meeting this natural desire for activity," thus preventing naughtiness and precluding any need for punishment.

Again she was asked whether she considered the average mother the best person to bring up a child, an issue which had created controversy elsewhere. Her reply was noted as being "evasive" when she answered, "A good mother can accomplish a tremendous amount by following my method, and incidentally derive much from it herself." For the best possible development of the child along "absolutely natural lines," she added, a number of children should grow up together. When asked if children should be forced to eat, she again mentioned child study as a means of finding out what the child "really needs to eat." This accomplished, "there will be no more refusals to eat."[54]

Besides touring the city and Harvard, Montessori was able to see at the children's library of the Boston Public Library "the fulfillment of one of [her] dearest dreams." She had always had a "vision of a little room for children, where there would be little tables and chairs and books and pictures especially selected for children," but she had "never dreamed such a place really existed."[55]

For her morning lecture on Dec.13 the house was packed--between five and six thousand--and hundreds were turned away, but at the evening lecture some seats were empty. The Globe described this Boston phenomenon:

> A typically Bostonian scene was witnessed from 9 to 11 a.m. in the lobby of Tremont Temple--an enthusiasm for a new educational method which had sent people by the hundreds, clamoring to buy seats in an auditorium long ago sold out to the last chair--and a stubborn refusal to buy seats for the evening lecture, for which there were and still are good seats available. Over and over the box-office clerk would say, "All sold out for the morning, but I can give you good seats for tonight," and the would-be patron would refuse. Previous engagements probably explained most of this action, but the manager for Dr. Montessori said that in this respect Boston was showing a marked difference from the other cities where the famous educator has lectured.[56]

The Transcript found the audience predominantly female, but they were "not all school teachers and educators by any means. The members of the New England Montessori Association were out in force and greeted the distinguished Italian visitor with loud applause and the waiving of large blue banners."[57]

McClure floridly introduced Montessori as one who "has discovered the childhood of a nobler race than we know." As she spoke, the "audience was deeply interested and nearly every paragraph was followed by applause." When she pointed out one common mistake of child rearing, "there was slow, astonished laughter as the people realized the proposition advanced, that children should be literally encouraged to handle the utensils of housekeeping and the tools of the trade, and that to forbid them was ridiculous."[58]

The Globe report on the films was more complete than any other during the tour:

> The children, most of them apparently between the ages of 3 and 7, performed not only the exercises with the various apparatus of blocks, sandpaper letters, graduated weights, bills and rods; they also set a table completely, brought the soup, seated the guests and began dinner.

> The most noticeable thing was the entire freedom of the children. One would say there was almost no instruction. Those not engaged in the operations shown were standing or sitting about, watching the children at work. The teachers were rarely shown actually showing the pupils anything; for the most part the youngsters went through their tasks entirely by themselves.
>
> And a happier, more roguish, smiling lot of bambini it would be impossible to imagine. Most of the pictures were made in Dr. Montessori's own home; the rest were in the convent, which was one of the first to take up the Montessori methods.[59]

Montessori also took time to make special mention of her appreciation for her supporters at Harvard. This was, she said, the first institution in America to take real interest in her work. As she concluded, there was a "prolonged demonstration that delayed the speaker's exit from the stage."[60]

While Montessori enjoyed enthusiastic audiences and the support of many friends in Boston, the city's press was more cautious (when not overtly critical) than in any other stop on the tour. The venerable Transcript in viewing the crowds at the morning lecture remarked, "New and radical theories of education always attract wide attention in this country." While it admired the Italian visitor's noble purposes and genuine faith, it was wary of a "danger that in their sudden zeal some will undertake to apply these methods with only a superficial understanding of them and their tendencies. Radical departures from accepted standards need to be conducted with caution. If a reform gets no farther than a fad, it might better never have been started at all." All in all, the Transcript saw her visit as a "wholesome influence," and it did "not think the lady's mission among us bodes any danger to our future society or citizenship."[61]

The Globe was not so charitable. It thought Montessori's statement that a "child is not naturally naughty may be worthy of belief in academic circles, but in most home circles it will be taken with a large pail of salt." It also jeered at a minor view of the visitor: "[She] expresses the opinion that long hair would be effective on men, and that knickerbockers would go a long way toward making men more beautiful. Huh!"[62]

A New Hampshire lady down to Boston to hear the Italian found the "'chop-suey' style of lecturing" to be "severe on lecturer and audience." Montessori had a "pleasing countenance," she thought, but was"equipped with the usual rather shrill and penetrating Italian voice and many gestures." Miss George bothered her also. The "high-pitched intensity" of her voice "increased the necessity of strained attention." Some of Montessori's more mystical comments also got to her. After speaking of fulfilling the physical needs of a child, Montessori mentioned the needs of the "deeper life." "This is all very fine talk," her listener later wrote, "with that delightful vagueness of terms that hypnotizes us sometimes into thinking we are hearing new and great truths. What does the Dottoressa mean by 'the deeper life'?"[63]

If the criticism in Boston bothered her, Dr. Montessori did not reveal it. In fact, she said she was loving her tour and Americans even if the rapid pace was making it a "feast of Tantalus." She told a group of reporters at the Plaza in New York the next day that she thought Americans the most intelligent people in the world. Her audiences here had a "quicker appreciation of the niceties of thought" than she had ever ex-

perienced before a European group. Americans, she felt, had leapt to the "high places of existence without travelling the long road necessary for the people of less enlightened governments."

Nothing, she said, showed more that Americans were a "great race" with a great future than their interest in their children. Had not the downfall of the Egyptian civilization been traced by historians directly to the neglect of their children? America need have no fear. One only had to look, she said, at the magnificence and grandeur of the "palaces you have erected for your children."

But the concern for children was not all, she went on. The cities were so beautiful, the skyscrapers were so lovely at night, and the people so nice. There was that wonderful American custom of the handshake. "We never experience that in Europe. It is never possible to meet people so intimately, to tell from the contact of their hands and the expression of their eyes how much they are in sympathy."[64] With this effusion of praise Montessori at last made even the chauvinistic Philadelphia Ledger pleased with her. "Montessori," it observed, "seems to have divested herself of most [European] prejudices . . . While educating us, she is educating herself."[65]

The decision to schedule a second lecture in New York was a good one, and Montessori was again rewarded with a big crowd. Although she had been in the country now for two weeks and had given six public lectures--all substantially the same--the papers were still able to find new "angles" to headline. "SMASH YOUR TOYS IF YOU WANT TO; DR. MONTESSORI GIVES CHILDREN LEEWAY TO WRECK CHRISTMAS PRESENTS" was the way the Tribune headed its coverage of the second Carnegie Hall lecture. Children are not naturally destructive, but if they smash a toy it's because it's too

complicated, they reported the Italian as saying. Children pull apart something they do not understand. The Tribune even agreed with Montessori editorially. Bachelor uncles and aunts, they pointed out, might take practical notice of the dottoressa's warning in giving toys. "The complete self-sufficient mechanical toy makes a pretty close parallel," they went on, "to much of our education," which bores the child because he "does not understand what it is all about."[66]

The reporter for the Times dwelt on Montessori's criticism of parents who did not allow children to touch objects in the home as well as her observation that the attention span of three-to-six-year olds lengthens when they are working at tasks of interest to them. When children are active in interesting work, the teacher's tasks are diminished. "The child must grow in liberty if he is to grow well," the doctor emphasized. "There is no other way in which his natural development can take place. The primal impulse of the child is to become a man," she added, "and he must have liberty to find those conditions and that help which will enable him to become in his fullest possibilities, the man he was destined to be."[67]

The next morning was set aside for a visit to Thomas Edison's workshop in West Orange, N.J.[68] The inventor liked the Method and recorded in his diary, "It teaches through play. It makes learning a pleasure. It follows the natural instincts of the human being." In contrast, Edison said he had found the American "system" of education to be a "dull study of twenty-six hieroglyphs."[69]

The concluding days of the tour were to the west, and in late evening Montessori arrived in Pittsburgh.

"That the prophecy, 'A little child shall lead them,' is for the first time to be fulfilled in the educational world was the conviction borne in upon the mind of those who listened to the soft Italian of Dr. Maria

Montessori last evening at the Hotel Schenley," effused a reporter for the Dispatch. Montessori, he added, "has awakened the wonder and admiration of the world." Female readers were kept in mind by the Post. Little was missed in describing the physical impression of the visitor: "a $2,500 caracul coat adorned her"; her eyes were "flashing, interesting black"; her voice was "silvery in tone"; her gestures were "delightful." For good measure the reporter added, "of course, she has just that familiar shrug of the shoulders so characteristic in foreigners."

The next day Montessori was shown the steel mills, and in the evening she went to the Carnegie Music Hall to lecture. Paderewski had appeared there the previous evening to a great ovation. Montessori's appearance was no less auspicious. The audience of the very "eclat, the elite, the intelligence of Pittsburgh" applauded. Only the moving pictures were disappointing. "When thrown upon the screen," one reporter noted, "they proved blurred and indistinct."[70]

The main stop of the western tour was Chicago. The trio of Montessori, McClure, and George arrived there during an educational and political maelstrom. The previous week Ella Flagg Young, Chicago's first female superintendent of schools, had quit her post while the school board was balloting on her reappointment. She said she had perceived she was not receiving the support she had expected. Montessori and her party checked in at the Blackstone in the middle of the two-week period during which Mrs. Young was without her post and while the mayor and her friends were gathering support to oust those board members hostile to her.[71]

Despite the furor created by local school politics Madame Montessori's visit was well publicized. "GREATEST OF CHILD TEACHERS SINCE FROEBEL AND PESTALOZZI WILL GREET CHICAGOANS THIS WEEK"[72] headlined one

article. It pointed out dramatically that this "Italian countess, who had renounced society life to become an educator," was going to tell teachers and parents how she had taught "the rudiments of geometry and arithmetic to children scarcely out of their swadding clothes." Her system, it observed, developed in children "a fondness for their studies not exceeded even by their liking for jams and lollypops." Furthermore, "her ideas of how children may be best trained by permitting them to do pretty much anything and everything their little hearts wish will be illustrated with motion pictures taken in her own schoolroom in Rome." How had she arrived at this system? By "studying children as a naturalist studies bees."

The question of teaching "sex hygiene" was a controversial one, then as now, and the reporters at the Blackstone insisted on her views. They turned out to be more conventional than much of "progressive" American educational thought:

> I am afraid the teaching of sex hygiene should be more restricted than it is at present in your schools. The teaching of sex hygiene itself might arouse curiosity about things a child should not know. If accompanied with spiritual teaching . . . sex hygiene might prove of advantage. Otherwise I believe it would be worse than worthless and even harmful. The curiosity of the child should be aroused, but upon only those subjects which he should be allowed of himself to have full knowledge. In many children, curiosity of the sexual functions would be disastrous . . .[73]

Another question which had dogged her throughout the tour was, "How do you differ from Froebel?" After all, as one questioner observed, Froebel wished the child to work in freedom, too. "Ah, but whose freedom?" Montessori began:

> . . . Froebel's, not the child. He came to the child with his philosophy about the child. I go to the child to get mine. He imposes his imagination upon the child. The result is to confuse the child. He tells him these blocks are a house. The child has his own concept of a house, and he sees the blocks, piled up

> into something the instructor calls a house. The result is to confuse. It is a false psychiatry. Not in that way is a Dante made. The imagination must be the child's. He must first of all see clearly. Then out of the whole world of metaphors and comparisons he may choose what he likes.[74]

As for herself she had no ideas on how a child should be educated, but she had "had a little experience." Everything she knew about the child she had found out by "watching him react to stimulation." If the given stimulus interested and animated as well as aided the child's moral, mental, and spiritual development she used it. If it failed, she rejected it. "Find out from the child, acting in freedom, what wants to develop him, and give it to him."[75]

One person present complained that American children of the kindergarten and first grade had found her didactic apparatus too simple. "What wonder," she smiled back. "It was meant for the sense development of children between the ages of 2 1/2 and 5, maybe 6 years of age, really babies." In fact, she reiterated, this tour was to raise money for extending her work to cover the requirements of older children.

Her first lecture the following afternoon in the Illinois Theatre was sold out. Superintendent John D. Shoop, Mrs. Flagg's replacement, had closed the schools early to allow teachers to attend, and many were turned away. Mrs. Young appeared with her on the stage. This was her first public appearance since her resignation. As she rose to introduce Montessori, Mrs. Young was greeted with such a "storm of applause" that "she was forced to lift her hand and ask for silence. She did not allude to the recent action of the school board." The lecture proceeded as usual with only a "pleasant interruption" to make Montessori a member of the Chicago Academy of Sciences.[76]

The following morning she repeated her lecture with Jane Addams sharing the platform. The success of her Chicago appearance is indicated by Superintendent Shoop's announcement that he looked forward to the day when her method would be taken up in the city's schools.[77]

McClure was so pleased with the Chicago reception that he immediately reported to Mrs. Bell. "We have got safely through and once more I am able to breathe freely." He was enthusiastic about Miss George, whom he said had "been more than an angel." "Chicago," he went on, "has done us proud & loudly applauded Miss George" -- a person he had come to regard "as the most remarkable woman I've ever known in many respects." As to Montessori, he said she had been "successful everywhere," and "excepting her neurasthenia & resulting fatigues" he had found her a "very good travelling associate."[78]

By the end of the Chicago appearance these "fatigues" of the previous two weeks had taken their toll on Montessori. She was exhausted. McClure stepped in and took her off to the Battle Creek Sanitarium run by his old friend, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, the health food exponent and a pioneer of the flaked cereal industry. It was reported that while precautions were being taken to insure absolute quiet for Madame Montessori, she was not ill.[79]

This famed sanitarium has been described as combining the features of a "diversified clinic, the Chautauqua lecture circuit, and White Sulphur Springs." Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford, and John Burroughs--to name a few of the famous patients--had responded to the balm of the clinic. Widely advertised as the place to come to clear up "brain fag, mental confusion, indecision, lack of vim, and chronic weariness," it promised Miss Montessori would be in good hands.[80]

Two days later Montessori was back in New York for her final evening in America. The Women's Cosmopolitan Club gave her a farewell reception, and from it McClure and a committee from the Montessori Educational Association escorted her to the pier of the Cunard Lines. She found her cabin in the Lusitania filled with flowers and fruit.

It had been a wonderful tour. America is "one of the hopes of the civilized world," she said. "The feel of youth is in the air and soil. You will rear here," she said, "the greatest race the world has ever known. It is in your blood. The mixing of the peoples of the earth will produce a great posterity." And finally, as if to salve any antagonism felt over earlier remarks, she added that she must "bow with humility" to "one of the greatest wonders"--the American mother.

One hour after midnight the Lusitania pulled away for Liverpool. The tour was over.[81]

Montessori was barely at sea before a flood of opinion and evaluation--particularly from the journals--poured over the recent tour. Current Opinion was quite correct when it said the recent visit had "unloosed a thousand tongues and a thousand pens," but it was a little less accurate when it added that Americans, insofar as they understood the Italian's ideas, were "surprisingly sympathetic with them."[82] Observers of the vagaries in American education, then as now, need not be surprised by the weak spot their countrymen have and have had--even if ever so briefly--over the years for new educational plans, methods or pedagogical utopias. The Method was to be no exception. Whether it be Joseph Lancaster's grand scheme for cheap education in his Monitorial Schools in the early years of the Republic or Mr. Neill's promises for unrepressed children in our imported Summerhills of today, Americans have been remarkably ready to

"experiment" with their children's education. The roll call of pedagogical novelties tried and cast aside is a long one.

This trait in Americans and American educationists, in particular, was identified a few days after the Italian's departure by A.E. Winship, editor of the Journal of Education in Boston, as educational "punging." He said that he used to know

> ...some small girls with a good bringing up, whose father had a horse and sleigh of his own, who reveled in 'punging.' They would stand on the street corner in their suburban city and jump on to the runner of a pung going up Perkins street until they could see a pung coming down Perkins street, when they would tumble off one pung and jump up on to the runner of the other pung, riding by the hour on pung runners and never going more than two blocks from home.[83]

These girls, Winship noted, would never "leave 'punging' for a dandy sleigh ride under good robes behind a fast horse for ten miles." Rather, it was the "jumping on and tumbling off [that] was the greatest sport ever." Among professional educators, he said, he had found lots of people who enjoyed

> ...educational punging more than anything else in the world. They will jump on to any new thing going one way till they see a newer thing going the other way, when they tumble off regardless of bruises to their reputation for consistency and jump on to the runner of the other pung. There are always enough of these pungsters to furnish applause for any new thing under the sun. The McClure-Montessori combination has its quota of these pungsters.[84]

Whether from pungsters or not, effusive praise continued for the Method. The Christian Work and Evangelist, a non-denominational paper, found it to be "simply the auto-method--the Jesus Method--loving children and leading them in love through the senses up to the spiritual God, the Father of all the living." Dr. Claxton weighed in by saying he thought the Method should be adopted by New York City.[85] Most of the journals in their concluding assessments generally agreed with the Italian on the need

for more child study and "physiological observation." Many spoke well of the interest children showed in her didactic apparatus.

As friendly as all this was, second thoughts as well as outright criticism began to mount. One "kindergartener" wrote the New York Times decrying the commercialization of the Method. The Froebel material, she noted, is "free to all, to be procured as the need demands" but with her patented apparatus Montessori says (in spirit), " 'Buy my sequence. If you do not feel equal to my table d'hote there is the alternative, prayer and fasting.'" She thought"open-minded kindergarteners" ought to be permitted to produce such features of the Montessori material as they felt capable of using "to the ultimate good of the minds" in their charge.[86]

A number of commentators saw "nothing new" in Montessori, only refinements or variations on Froebel or Rousseau. But they usually were ready to add that the Italian was "stimulating," or they found her method "fascinating" in theory, as did Frank Herbert Palmer, editor of Education. He observed that in practice it was needed in "many, many instances to release childhood from the tyranny and abuse of nervous, ill-tempered, careless, ignorant and vicious parents, unsympathetic and dictational teachers, and hard, unreasonable conditions at home and at school." Even so, he saw much of Madame Montessori's message being heard by the "upper or middle-class mother, with one child and one or more maids."[87]

But by far the greatest comment and criticism raised by Montessori and her Method during the tour and afterward centered on her views on the freedom of the child. One writer pointed out that "a dread has come on many mothers lest making children obey may some way stunt their growth or malform their lives--stamp on them the arbitrary impress of wills other than their own."[88] And this is where Montessori is limited, said Palmer.

Some children are born with "such perversions of spirit," he observed, that there simply must be "don'ts." He added he once knew a boy

> . . .who loved to kill. He would climb a tree and wring the necks of young birdlings in their nests, catch insects and pull off their wings and legs and do many other such dreadful things. By all means study such a case à la Montessori, but while studying it someone absolutely must enforce some very vigorous and un-Montessorian "don'ts." 89

Carrying Palmer's point further, the Presbyterian paper, The Continent, observed that the Method fell short because it did not recognize that for a child's education to be complete "two diverse developments must work out in his life." These were the "development of his own individuality and the development of his adjustment to other lives." Montessori, it asserted, was long on the first and negligent of the latter. Freedom is prized in society and politics, but nobody is fit for freedom, it declared, "who has not learned to make room for the well-being of others by accepting limitations of the exercise of his own impulses."[90]

Whereas The Continent was willing to grant Montessori the ability to develop the child's individuality, her most vigorous American critic, William Heard Kilpatrick of Teachers College, was not sure of that. Her apparatus, he noted, "by its very theory represents a limited series of exactly distinct and very precise activities, formal in character and very remote from social interests and connections."[91]

Prior to the tour Kilpatrick had criticized the Method. In 1912 he went to Rome, interviewed Montessori, and on his return spoke and wrote his objections publicly and privately. The system, he thought, was permeated by a belief in the now discredited theory of formal discipline. If children want to learn to lace shoes, let them lace shoes, he said, not fool around with the Montessori apparatus. Furthermore, Samuel Tenenbaum, Kilpatrick's biographer, reports that in his interview

with the Italian the American was "taken aback to discover that she was apparently not aware that [formal discipline] had been discarded and discredited in both Germany and America."[92] He also confided a very personal objection to Montessori's method to a member of his family: "The same psychology that leads people to expect panaceas in medicine, even in such humbugs as electric wells . . . leads them to look favorably upon any well-advertised scheme of get-educated-quick processes."[93]

Shortly after Montessori's departure for home Kilpatrick's The Montessori System Examined was published in which he set down his criticisms at length. Montessori's doctrine "belongs essentially to the mid-nineteenth century," he observed, "some fifty years behind the present development of educational theory." Kilpatrick drew in his book an extensive and unfavorable comparison of the Italian's work to that of John Dewey. For example, he pointed out Dewey's emphasis in the earliest schooling of children (while not abjuring the need for reading and writing) is placed on activities "more vital to child-life which should at the same time lead toward the mastery of our complex social environment." On the other hand, Montessori's "much narrower conception of education" led her constantly to use "logically simple units as if they were also the units of psychological experience."[94]

In his conclusions on Montessori's contributions, Kilpatrick damned her with the faintest of praise. Her scientific conception of education was certainly valid, but "no one could say that the world did not have a fuller conception of it prior to her." While her work was "stimulating," it was "neither novel nor correct." In her doctrine of liberty her

practice would prove "distinctly valuable," but it made "no theoretical contribution." "We decline to accept except in a very modified degree" her sense-training and didactic apparatus, he noted. Montessori's "preparation for the school arts should prove very helpful," he magnanimously observed, "in Italy." But, all in all, he added, "We owe no large point of view to Madame Montessori."[95]

If Kilpatrick's work came as a sour note at the conclusion of the tour, Montessori's relationship with S.S. McClure struck a more personally unpleasant one. As she sailed for home, she was still enthusiastic about her American partner and assured him that she had "unlimited confidence" in him.[96]

But beneath the surface there was turbulence. Peter Lyon reports an "unseemly scramble" to exploit Montessori, the Method, and the apparatus with McClure scrambling with the next one. McClure "claimed he sought control of the various Method enterprises solely to protect the Dottoressa from exploitation, and this may very well have been the case, but his concern was not wholly altruistic." Of the proceeds from the tour, McClure took twenty per cent, a manager twenty per cent, leaving Montessori sixty per cent. Even after Montessori returned home, she allowed McClure to keep the films, and he continued lecturing for his own profit. At no time during the tour or afterwards was McClure dishonest, but as Lyon comments, "he had been naive, which, in the circumstances, was worse." McClure's gravest offense was in failing "to make his position clear." Montessori "had imagined him to be her Maecenas, while in fact he was only a promoter diligently delving for an honest dollar." Montessori's "affectionate letters" were soon supplanted by "chilly missives" from her lawyer. McClure relinquished the power of attorney Montessori had given

him, returned her films, and left the battle for progressive education--a battle, Lyon notes "he should never have joined." His four months of work netted him $492.99.[97]

Gilbert Grosvenor, the Bell son-in-law, saw the matter in a different light. In a letter to Mrs. Bell some months later he observed that Montessori "is undoubtedly a genius and has all the irresponsibilities of a genius, but at the same time she seems to me of a very suspicious nature. I should hate very much to have any business dealings with her . . . ." As to McClure's role in the tour, he wrote:

> We all know Mr. McClure's weaknesses, but I think his promotion of Madame Montessori and her ideas was entirely altruistic. She owes her entire success in America to him, and yet, because she thought he ought to have sent her $100 more than he actually did send, she writes him a most insulting letter and discontinues all dealings with him. This action on her part, in my judgment, is inexcusable. McClure obtained for her a profit of $3,600 for a lecture tour in the worst month of the year, namely-December. This profit was net, and to it should be added all her expenses from Italy and in America, including the expenses of a maid, etc.[98]

All along her tour route Maria Montessori received entreaties to return and set up schools and promote her work. Although in her lifetime she would never again receive the attention in America that she received on the tour, she did return in 1915 to the west coast.[99] Thousands attending the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition saw her method in operation in a glass classroom. An assistant, Miss Helen Parkhurst, who later gained fame for her own "Dalton Plan," was frequently the teacher. But the times were against Montessori and her work in America. The turmoil of World War I and America's subsequent turning away from Europe were in themselves enough to interrupt this international activity. But American Montessorianism had other troubles as well. Certainly she had

her "pungsters" who moved on to other causes. Others complained of the cost of the materials. Feuds broke out among her American followers as to which group had the "true word."[100] Furthermore, Montessori was probably her own worst enemy. She was a poor mediator. Bailey Willis, an emissary from Mrs. Bell to Montessori, wrote back to Washington from San Francisco on how he found the Italian:

> [Montessori] feels herself a stranger, facing unknown influences, distrustful of would-be friends. She is jealous, somewhat fanatical, independent, and intensely feminine. She demands a loyalty to her ideas, which is perhaps not consciously a demand for loyalty to her person; but she is very exacting and critical, although she herself suffers when she feels that anyone whom she cares for . . . has failed her. She will be neither practical, nor reasonable, nor constant in her relations.[101]

However, it probably was the growing popularity of the kindergarten and the American-grown progressive education movement that contributed most to the demise of the movement. Winship noted that native educational "experts" with "their own bandwagons decidely object to having a more noisy and brilliant circus parade on the streets at the same time."[102] Montessori had been "included out" of the American educationist establishment. Years later, Miss Parkhurst gave Martin Mayer a more personal reason for the collapse of the movement in America: Montessori had brought her natural son with her to California.[103] The National Education Association met with the Exposition that year, and it takes little imagination to appreciate the shock and thrill caused as middle-class pedagogues whispered this dark news outside the meeting halls. At any rate, the Method would have to wait four decades when, in the wake of Sputnik, it was re-established here on a stronger footing.

NOTES

1. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 4, 1913.
2. New York Tribune, December 4, 1913.
3. New York Times, December 4, 1913.
4. New York Tribune, December 4, 1913.
5. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 4, 1913.
6. S. S. McClure, My Autobiography (New York:Frederick A.Stokes Co., 1914),p.253.
7. Ibid., p.252. Also Peter Lyon, Success Story (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p.350.
8. Anne E. George, "The Montessori Movement In America," Report of the Commissioner of Education (Washington,D.C., 1914), vol.1, pp.356-359.
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10. Fairchild, op. cit., p.399.
11. Ibid., pp.399-400.
12. Helen Elmira Waite, Make A Joyful Sound (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Co., 1961), p. 256.
13. McClure's Magazine (August, 1913), 201.
14. Lyon, op. cit., p.350.
15. Ibid., p. 351.
16. Letter from S. S. McClure to Mrs. A. G. Bell, November 13, 1913. In the Montessori Papers, Bell Room, National Geographic Society Library. Hereinafter cited as MPBR.
17. New York Times, November 21, 1913.
18. Ibid., December 7, 1913.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 5, 1913.

23. New York Tribune, December 4, 1913.

24. Ibid.

25. Quoted in Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 6, 1913.

26. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 5 and 6, 1913.

27. New York Times, December 4, 1913.

28. Washington Times (Evening), December 4, 1913. Other newspaper accounts cast doubt on whether the meeting took place.

29. Washington Post, December 5, 1913.

30. Ibid.

31. Washington Herald, December 6, 1913.

32. Evening Star (Washington), December 5, 1913; Washington Herald, December 6, 1913.

33. Ibid.

34. Washington Times, December 6, 1913; Washington Herald, December 7, 1913.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.; Washington Post, December 7, 1913.

37. Providence Sunday Journal, December 7, 1913.

38. New York Times, December 7, 1913.

39. Letter from Mrs. A. G. Bell to Mrs. Hensley, December 26 [1914?], MPBR.

40. New York Tribune, December 9, 1913.

41. New York Times, December 9, 1913.

42. Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1914), pp. vii-viii.

43. Lorena A. Hickok, The Touch of Magic (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1961), p.133.

44. Accounts of the visit are in the Boston Herald and the New York Tribune, December 10, 1913. and "When Helen Keller Met Montessori," Literary Digest, 48 (January 17, 1914), 134-135, 137.

45. Helen Keller, Helen Keller's Journal, 1936-1937 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1938), p.66. In 1915, Helen Keller reaffirmed her interest in Montessori's work by writing in the journal of the Montessori Educational Association: "I am ... deeply interested in the work of the Montessori Association. The right education of the child is the most important question of our day. Every thoughtful person knows that there is something wrong with our present system of education. It does not develop the child, it does not make him a happy, efficient human being. I have tasted the sweet joy of the new freedom for the child. I have learned the delight of doing things I loved to learn and do; and through this free method I have been helped to build up my life in spite of many obstacles and discouragements. I am looking forward to the day when every child shall pass the first years of his life in happy, fruitful study, with every opportunity to develop his individuality. When that happy time dawns we shall see a better, nobler race upon the earth." "A Word From Helen Keller," Freedom For The Child, 2 (July, 1915), 21.

46. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 5 and 6, 1913.

47. Ibid, December 8, 1913.

48. Ibid., December 9, 1913.

49. Ibid., December 10, 1913.

50. Brooklyn Daily Eagle, December 12, 1913; Outlook, 105 (December 27, 1913), 864-865.

51. Clara E. Craig, The Montessori System of Child Culture (Providence: Department of Education, State of Rhode Island, 1913), 16 pp.

52. Providence Journal, December 13, 1913.

53. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1912.

54. Boston Daily Globe, December 13, 1913.

55. New York Tribune, December 15, 1913.

56. Boston Daily Globe (Evening), December 13, 1913.

57. Boston Evening Transcript, December 13, 1913.

58. Boston Daily Globe (Evening), December 13, 1913; Boston Sunday Herald, December 14, 1913.

59. Boston Daily Globe (Evening), December 13, 1913.

60. Boston Sunday Herald, December 14, 1913.

61. Boston Evening Transcript, December 13, 1913.

62. Boston Daily Globe, December 15 and 16, 1913.

63. Ruth H. French, "Dr. Montessori in Boston," Journal of Education, 79 (January 1, 1914), 12.

64. New York Tribune, December 15, 1913.

65. Public Ledger (Philadelphia), December 16, 1913.

66. New York Tribune, December 16 and 17, 1913.

67. New York Times, December 16, 1913.

68. Ibid., December 12, 1913.

69. Dagobert D. Runes (ed.), The Diary and Sundry Observations of Thomas Alva Edison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), pp. 111-112.

70. Pittsburgh Post, December 17 and 18, 1913; Pittsburg Dispatch, December 17, 1913.

71. Record-Herald (Chicago), December 11-24, 1913, passim.

72. Sunday Record-Herald (Chicago), December 14, 1913.

73. Chicago Daily Tribune, December 19, 1913.

74. Record-Herald (Chicago), December 19, 1913.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., December 20, 1913; Chicago Daily Tribune, December 20, 1913.

77. Record-Herald (Chicago), December 19 and 21, 1913.

78. Letter from S. S. McClure to Mrs. A. G. Bell, December 20, 1913, MPBR. In September, 1915 when relations between Mrs. Bell and Dr. Montessori had become chilly (after the latter's disavowal of any official connection between her and the Montessori Educational Association), Mrs. Bell commented on Miss George's role on the tour: "To think of Miss George's slaving for her during those weeks of traveling, acting as ladies maid, secretary and general protector and nurse, of our own very real loss in the efficiency of our school, and know that it all counts for nothing and [Montessori] proposes to employ lawyers and business men to defend her against us ...." Letter from Mrs. A. G. Bell to Bailey Willis, September 5, 1915, MPBR.

79. Detroit Tribune, December 21, 1913; New York Times, December 21, 1913.

80. Horace B. Powell, The Original Has This Signature--W.K. Kellogg (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p.80. Advertisement quoted from Literary Digest, (January 17, 1914), 135.

81. New York Times, December 24, 1913.

82. "What America Thinks of Montessori's Educational Crusade," Current Opinion 56 (February, 1914), 127.

83. "Montessori-McClure," Journal of Education, 78 (December 25, 1913), 662.

84. Ibid.

85. "What American Thinks of Montessori's Educational Crusade," op. cit., 128.

86. New York Times, December 12, 1913. This criticism had already been voiced earlier by William Heard Kilpatrick. In a letter in 1912 to his mother he wrote:"...the fact that this [Montessori] material has been patented, that infringements are threatened with suit, that no part is sold apart from the whole--all this makes us think that this is being pushed from financial, not pedagogical motives." Samuel Tenenbaum, William Heard Kilpatrick, Trail Blazer in Education (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), p. 93.

87. "American Notes--Editorial," Education, 34 (January, 1914), 328.

88. "The Limitations of the Montessori Method From a Religious Point of View," Current Opinion, 56 (April, 1914), 292.

89. "American Notes--Editorial," op. cit.

90. Quoted in "The Limitations of the Montessori Method...," op.cit.

91. William Heard Kilpatrick, The Montessori System Examined (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), p.27.

92. Tenenbaum, op.cit., pp.96-97.

93. Ibid.

94. Kilpatrick, op.cit., pp.63-64.

95. Ibid., pp.66-67.

96. Lyon, op.cit., p. 351.

97. Ibid., pp.351-352.

98. Letter from Gilbert H. Grosvenor to Mrs. A. G. Bell, December 4, 1914.MPBR.

99. In May and June she gave an "International Training Course" in Los Angeles under the auspices of the Board of Education there which seems to have been disappointingly small and not very "international": 36 Americans, a Swiss and an Australian. While in Los Angeles she made appearances in Pasadena, San Diego, the Los Angeles State Normal College and the University of Southern California. In August she moved up to San Francisco. Freedom For The Child, 2 (July, 1915), passim.

100. Sister Mary Leonard Fugina, "Origins and Current Status of the Montessori Movement in the United States." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh. Pa., 1963, passim.; Mary Lorene K. Wills, "Conditions Associated With the Rise and Decline of the Montessori Method of Kindergarten-Nursery Education in the United States From 1911-1921." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Ill., 1966, passim.

101. Letter from Bailey Willis, no salutation, September 16, 1915, MPBR.

102. "American Notes-Editorial," op. cit.

103. Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method (Cambridge, Mass.: Robert Bentley, 1964) Introduction by Martin Mayer, p. xxv.